

Reopening of Food Establishments: Minimizing the Spread of COVID-19

May 14, 2020

Dear Food Establishment Operator,

Thank you for doing your part to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Food establishments that closed the kitchen and/or dining area should do the following when reopening:

Equipment and Physical Structure

- Make sure utilities are working (for example; electrical, plumbing, and heating, ventilation/air conditioning, and fire suppression)
- Flush water system and all plumbed food equipment for a minimum of 5 minutes
- Ice makers should be fully emptied, pipes drained, and the equipment washed, rinsed and sanitized
- Assess and discard food that is no longer safe (e.g., expired or spoiled foods)
- Check that all equipment is functioning properly and maintaining proper temperatures
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize all food contact surfaces
- Continue services you may have discontinued (for example, pest control services, trash and recycling services)
- Thoroughly clean and repair all physical facilities including floors, walls, and ceilings

Employee Health & Safety

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 via employee health monitoring is critical and food establishments must consider how the following will be implemented:

- Train workers on symptoms of COVID-19 illness and on required hand hygiene
- Screen employees for symptoms of COVID-19. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19: cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing. They may also have COVID-19 if they have at least two of the following: fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell.
- Ensure handwashing sinks are stocked with soap and paper towels and hand sanitizers are available
- Ensure 6 feet of distance between employees in both back and front of house
- Require cloth face coverings for employees. This is not a substitute for 6 foot social distancing. Under the Local Health Officer Directive, employees who prepare, carry out, and deliver food must wear cloth face coverings.
- Stagger work schedules as much as possible to reduce employee contact
- Develop employee illness policies and procedures

Customer Protections

- While awaiting for the Governor's approval for customer seating, please plan and prepare in the following ways: Discontinue reusable menus if unable to thoroughly disinfect after each use -- post menu options or provide disposable menus
- Clean and disinfect touchpoints hourly, including all surfaces at each table turning
- Self-service food bars and self-service fountain drinks may still be restricted

- Remove as many self-service condiment dispensers from tables or shared areas as possible
- Disinfect condiment containers after each dining group
- Ensure dining groups are seated at least 6 feet apart and remove or block extra seating
- Utilize contactless payment systems, automated ordering and mobile pay or provide handwashing or hand gel for employees handling payment
- Disinfect all touchpads after each use
- Maximize pick-up or delivery services
- Encourage customers to wear cloth face coverings while not seated at their table if dining or waiting for take-out in accordance with the Local Health Officer Directive. Download posters [here](#).

Governor Inslee’s Proposed Phase-in Plan

Currently, retail food establishments are under Phase 1 which does not permit dining in, rather drive-thru and to-go orders only. Under Governor Inslee’s proposed phase-in plan for businesses, the following would occur based on evidence of reduced COVID-19 risk to the community:

Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take-out & delivery service only ▪ Onsite dining areas closed with tables and chairs stacked ▪ Essential services only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restaurants <50% capacity ▪ Table size limited to no more than 5 people ▪ Bars closed ▪ Need to maintain physical distancing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restaurants <75% capacity ▪ Table size limited to no more than 10 people ▪ Bars <25% capacity ▪ Need to maintain physical distancing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full capacity

- **The anticipated time between phases is 3-4 weeks, however this is based on evidence of COVID-19 spread in the community. In the event that there is increased COVID-19 risk, then phases 2-4 may be revert back to phase 1.**

COVID-19 Information and Resources

Stay up-to-date on the [current COVID-19 situation in Washington](#), [Governor Inslee’s proclamations](#), [symptoms](#), [how it spreads](#), and [how and when people should get tested](#). See our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

- National Restaurant Association: [Restaurant Reopening Guidance](#)
- Association of Food and Drug Officials: [Recommendations for Easing COVID-19 Restrictions for the Retail Food Industry](#)
- Public Health-Seattle & King County Covid-19 [resource pages](#)
- Washington State Department of Health:
 - [WA State Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak \(COVID-19\)](#)
 - [WA State Coronavirus Response \(COVID-19\)](#)
 - [CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
 - [Stigma Reduction Resources](#)